Justice
September 29, 2008

Right to Know Week Recognized

The Honourable Jerome Kennedy, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, today acknowledged September 28 - October 3 as *Right to Know Week* in Newfoundland and Labrador. *Right to Know Week* is internationally recognized as a period to celebrate democracy, affirm the public's right to access information held by government and acknowledge openness and transparency within the public sector.

"Openness and transparency are essential to the success of any government and both are fundamental principles of our administration," said Minister Kennedy. "The *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (ATIPP) provides a process for the public to request information and also protects the personal information of individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador."

In 2008, the ATIPP Office has facilitated almost 400 requests for information from the public which attests to the success of this legislation. As well, in January of this year the Provincial Government proclaimed the privacy provisions of the ATIPP Act which provide the public the right to access and make corrections to their personal information in the custody and control of public bodies. The provisions also allow the public to know why such information is collected and how it is used and established protocols for public bodies to follow.

"The protection of personal information is of paramount concern for our government and we continue to take steps to ensure such information is appropriately managed in accordance with the ATIPP legislation," said Minister Kennedy. "As recently announced, an ongoing review of our online services is currently underway which will further enhance the protection of personal information."

Employees of the ATIPP Office continue to provide comprehensive training, support and tools for the 460 ATIPP co-ordinators working within public bodies across Newfoundland and Labrador. *Right to Know Week* is an opportunity for residents and public bodies alike to recall their responsibilities for the management of personal information and recognize the right of the public to access information.

"Our government is proud of its record of openness and transparency as demonstrated by the number ATIPP requests filled, passing *the Lobbyist Registration Act* and the *Transparency and Accountability Act* and establishing the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner," said Minister Kennedy.

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